



Washington's

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Introduction

THE CHALLENGE

The state of Washington is in the midst of a transportation crisis. Simply stated, investment in our statewide transportation infrastructure has failed to keep pace with our use of the system, driven by burgeoning population, economic growth and development. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has a responsibility to provide a safe, efficient, and effective transportation system to serve the people of Washington State. Yet, our state's transportation system faces many difficulties. Washington State's population continues to grow — each year, more people are traveling more miles on an already overburdened and aging transportation system. Traffic congestion, unsafe conditions, and increased pollution threaten the vitality of our economy, the quality of life in our communities, and the preservation of our environment.

We must solve our transportation crisis. If left unresolved, necessary activities like delivering goods and services, getting to and from work, schools, shops, and medical facilities will become increasingly more difficult. This is a critical time for Washington State's transportation system.

WHAT IS THE WTP?

Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP) is the state's blueprint for implementation programs and budget development to be pursued in coming years. This 2003-2022 update of the previous 1997-2016 WTP contains an overview of the current conditions facing the statewide transportation system, an assessment of the state's transportation investment needs for the next 20-years, and a statewide policy for transportation. The WTP also fulfills the requirements of state and federal law (see Appendix C). In future updates, the WTP will include a 10-year implementation plan with a prioritized strategy for meeting the needs of the people of Washington State.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We will actively develop preliminary plans and projections identifying additional highway corridors to meet our growing population and transportation needs. Such corridors may include expressway and/or tollways; additional state and interstate highways; tunneling through the

Cascades; providing additional freight corridors and services; developing alternative transportation options including enhanced passenger ferry services as well as transportation demand management programs. This plan is not set in concrete, but will be reviewed and updated by the Commission with the view of meeting our ever-changing and growing transportation challenge.

HOW WAS THE WTP DEVELOPED?

This plan is the result of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) working with the 14 Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), 28 federally recognized tribal governments, and local partners. All have been involved in the collaborative effort to obtain insight, direction, and data in planning the state's transportation future. It links transportation planning at the regional, tribal, and local levels with a statewide transportation policy.

Workshops, summits, meetings, and one-on-one communications brought critical local issues into the statewide planning process. The process collected proposals for transportation investments that, if implemented, will help move the state toward its overall transportation objectives.

The result of this planning process is a statewide policy and an inventory of potential investments to sustain a desirable transportation future in our state. The state's objective is to use its transportation investments to build and manage a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system benefitting the economy, local communities, and the environment.



WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

Chapter One – Overview of the State and the Transportation System

This chapter describes the geographic and economic elements that affect Washington's transportation system. It also includes an overview of the various components of the state's transportation system. Washington is a diverse state with unique regional economies and natural settings. Even though the regions of the state have many differing characteristics, each is dependent on the statewide system to move people and goods.

Chapter Two – Transportation Issues and Trends

This chapter describes the trends influencing transportation in Washington and how these trends affect the state's transportation system. This chapter also discusses the critical challenges ahead for the state's transportation system. Transportation demand is a function of the needs of individuals,

families, and businesses. Broader trends affecting Washington citizens and businesses, therefore, can significantly affect the demand for transportation services. Recognition of past, present, and likely future trends is essential in planning a balanced and efficient transportation system.

Chapter Three – RTPO Focus

Each Regional Transportation Planning Organization in Washington faces important regional issues and needs. WTP examines the unique regional transportation challenges that affect the quality of life for local citizens and the effectiveness of the statewide system.

Chapter Four – Tribal Focus

This chapter describes the important transportation issues of tribal governments in Washington State. Improving access to the transportation network is the key to economic development and other tribal activities for the twenty-eight federally recognized Tribes in the state.

Chapter Five – Statewide Focus

Chapter five highlights WSDOT's efforts to operate, maintain, preserve, and improve the transportation system while meeting other societal goals such as preserving the environment and supporting the economy.

Chapter Six – The Policy Framework

The WTP policy framework sets a course for the state's transportation future and determines which transportation investments are needed. The policy establishes what is important to the state and describes what actions WSDOT should take to meet those policy directions. The WTP establishes statewide policy to achieve three key elements of a desirable future: vibrant communities, a vital economy, and a sustainable environment. The potential projects identified at the regional, tribal, and state levels will help achieve this policy, which consists of 17 goals and 25 associated objectives.

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary

Definition of key terms included in the document.

Appendix B – Planning Process and Public Involvement

Documentation of the numerous agency workshops and public forums used to coordinate and develop the WTP.

Appendix C – Statutory Requirements

Federal and State law requires WSDOT to develop and the Commission to adopt WTP.

Appendix D – Transportation Facilities And Services Of Statewide Significance

Legislatively required definition of Transportation Facilities and Service of Statewide Significance (TFSSS).

Appendix E – Needs Database

How the needs (problems and solutions) were developed and what approaches are included (specific strategies, projects or services that are needed to address either state-owned or state-interest transportation problems).

The needs database is available on the WTP website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/wtp. It is also available on CD-ROM upon request.